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Autores / Autors Nos Aldás, Eloísa ; Murphy, Jennifer Marie

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Introduction

Eloísa Nos Aldás

Jennifer M. Murphy

This issue of the *Journal of Peace Review*, “Occupy Movements and the Indignant Figure,” springs out of the 2011 peaceful international social movements. Based on collective indignation and organized around 2.0-3.0 strategies, these new social movements exploded in regions across the globe, from North Africa to Spain, from the United States to the Middle East. In this “Occupy” context, our Castellón Spain-based research group, the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace at UJI (IUDESP), initiated regular research seminars to discuss their relevance and organized in tandem a Summer Course in July 2012.

Two years after the “15M” Spanish Revolution began, civil society globally sustains diverse calls for change (tweeted in social networks like #GlobalMay, #MayoGlobal, #Occupy and #Unity). In a constantly changing landscape of new social movements, civil society networking initiatives, such as the Arab Spring, the 15M, global Occupy movements or the PAH (Mortgages Support Platform in Spain), have substantially contributed to the development of diverse conceptualizations of one relatively novel figure: the “indignant.”

The indignant figure breaks into the public sphere from an active position that invites alliance and participation and joins collectively with other indignant. Here the spectacular element is the spontaneous, unplanned and forceful character of the event and actors. Above all, and of particular interest, is the

power of the indignant as an agent who directly participates in processes of social articulation, particularly as they relate to new communication technologies. What actually makes the “indignant” figure act in the face of multidimensional economic, social and political injustices? How do new “anti-system” Occupy movements question and problematize structures and relationships of inequality and power (raced, classed, gendered and sexed). How is the indignant figure represented?

The viral reproduction of indignant representations through Internet videos (often lacking contextualization) provides insight into the construction of an “imaginary” that repeatedly portrays conflict truth(s) or linkages to specific events in a manner that can both enhance and distort. Within these opposing abstract constructions, it is possible to trace different patterns of visibility and invisibility of certain actors and social processes, a relevant and timely research area with significant repercussions for the disciplinary and transdisciplinary conversations among fields such as communication, psychology, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies, gender studies and education. The indignant figure has responded to the economic vicissitudes of neoliberal globalization (eviction, exclusion, weakening or prohibition of democratic processes among others) and represents interesting issues of visibility related to the occasional vindication of anonymity, general opposition to old (status-quo) leadership, and structures and organizations that involve processes of institutionalization.

Within this theoretical and questioning framework, we seek to better understand today’s theoretical conceptual trajectory of indignant participators

(and their respective empowerment practices) in dynamic nonviolent Occupy and social movements as well as the mediums employed for their organization, like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Thus, the first block of essays in this issue is rooted in this theoretical (conceptual and methodological) discussion, and the second half enters into specific case studies, the exploration of Occupy movements and comparative debates in order to broaden the overall framework.

We look specifically at different new social movements and their idiosyncrasies and innovations for social justice, as envisioned by diverse indignant figures and collective movements. Our theorized indignant figure challenges us to more consciously and nonviolently interact with and imaginatively resist (rather than merely react against) unequal power relations that result in structures (and reproduced structures) of domination, segregation, marginalization and exclusion. Recognizing the intersectional complexities of these current movements and how a differentiated understanding of power functions in and through them allows us to challenge simplistic and “easy” analyses of Occupy constructions and compels us to remember influential movements that predate them. Thus, we trace Occupy’s unique tactical and “horizontalist” organizational forms (emphasizing consensus and direct democracy) and how it connects to past social movements. We explore representation of the indignant and how media sources “framed” these Occupy movements and constructed the indignant figure during a time of mass demonstrations for social change.

In conclusion, multiple simultaneous research projects of the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace at UJI (IUDESP) frame this issue and our interdisciplinary utopian, yet “realist,” search for the peaceful transformation of unequal power relations and re-distribution of wealth. The theoretical conceptualization of the “indignant” has been taken (and adapted) from the project proposal *“De víctimas a indignados: visibilidad mediática, migración de imágenes, espectacularización de los conflictos y procesos de transformación social hacia una cultura de paz”* [“From victims to indignants: media visibility, migration of images, conflicts spectacularization and social transformation processes for peace culture”] (P1·1A2012-05), led by Dr. Vicente J. Benet and funded by the Promotion Plan for Research of the Universitat Jaume I and the Bancaja-Fundación Caja Castellón. Our research group is also supported by the Spanish State Secretary of Research, Development and Innovation of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness through the specific project *“Evaluación e indicadores de Sensibilidad Moral en la Comunicación Actual de los Movimientos Sociales”* [“Evaluation model and indicators of moral sensitivity in the communication of social movements”] (CS02012-34066), led by Dr. Eloísa Nos Aldás. Additionally, this study forms part of the research project *“Epistemología e investigación para la paz. Necesidad de una nueva fundamentación epistemológica de la investigación para la paz desde una perspectiva filosófica”* [“Epistemology and Peace Research. The Necessity of a New Epistemological Foundation for Peace Research from a Philosophical Perspective”] (P1·1A2009-07), led by Dr. Irene Comins and funded by the

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Lastly, we thank the Peace Review for this opportunity to share the conclusions of our international and interdisciplinary research and for providing the platform to debate these topics. Through these essays, we engage in important and timely conversation with one another and with the University of San Francisco community and beyond. Each essay can be read independently or, even better, as a unit. Together, they explore our capacities to cooperate, to be indignant, to hope for and to imagine (in motion) nonviolent action for change in an alliance of culturally embedded subjectivities and differences.

Dr. Eloísa Nos Aldás is Tenured Lecturer at the Communication Sciences Department at the Universitat Jaume I (Castellón, Spain). She is the Head of the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace (IUDESP-UJI) at the same university. She has published numerous works in the academic field of Communication, Peace Culture and Social Change and teaches “Communication towards Equality” in undergraduate advertising courses and “Communication for Peace” in the International Master in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies at UJI (www.iudesp.uji.es).

Dr. Jennifer M. Murphy is a postdoctoral research fellow at the IUDESP-UJI, Castellón, Spain. She holds a European Doctorate in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies. Her thesis, written and defended in both English and Spanish, recently received the PhD Extraordinary Award. She currently lectures on philosophy for peace, interculturality, aesthetics of difference and research strategies. When reading and writing, she puts on her postcolonial and intersectionality lenses and opens her interdisciplinary research adventure to thinkers, theorists and practitioners from cultural, ethnic, gender and peace studies. Her website is: www.murphyjennifer.com. Email: jennimurf@gmail.com